

Khalifa Abu Bakr - Successor to the Holy Prophet

Appointment of Abu Bakr as the Imam.

Illness of the Holy Prophet. A short time after returning from the farewell pilgrimage, the Holy Prophet fell sick. The poison which a Jewess had given to him at Khyber had slowly penetrated into his system, and had begun to show its fatal effects. The Holy Prophet felt that having fulfilled his mission, his earthly life was to end, and he was to be summoned to his Master.

One night the Holy Prophet went to the graveyard and there prayed for the soul of his companions who had fallen in the battle of Uhud. The Holy Prophet felt that he was soon going to meet his dead companions. After the visit to the graveyard the Holy Prophet came home and visited the apartment of his wife Maimuna. There the fever became violent. The Holy Prophet assembled all his wives, and told them that on account of his sickness it would not be possible for him to visit the apartment of each wife according to her turn. He wanted their permission to stay in the apartment of Ayesha till he recovered. All the wives agreed to the proposal, and the Holy Prophet supported by Ali and Abbas moved to the apartment of Ayesha.

The Imamate of Abu Bakr. The Holy Prophet directed Abu Bakr to lead the prayers in the Prophet's mosque during his illness. Ayesha intervened to suggest that her father be not entrusted with this responsibility. She said that her father had a tender heart, and he would burst into tears while reciting the Holy Quran in the course of the prayer. The Holy Prophet overruled the objection and insisted that Abu Bakr alone should lead the prayers.

Holy Prophet's tribute to Abu Bakr. After shifting to the apartment of Ayesha the Holy Prophet felt some relief. A day later he took a bath. Refreshed by the bath, he felt some relief and went to the mosque to offer the noon day prayer. At the conclusion of the prayer the Holy Prophet took his seat on the pulpit, and addressing the congregation said: "There is a servant whose Lord has given him the option between this life, and the life in the next world close to the Lord, and the servant has chosen the latter."

Out of the congregation, Abu Bakr alone understood the implication of the address. Tears trickled down from his eyes, and with a heavy heart he said, "Holy Prophet, how can we live without you?" Thereupon the Holy Prophet continued: "O people, it has reached me that you are afraid of the approaching death of your Prophet. Has any previous prophet lived forever among those to whom he was sent so that I would live forever among you? Behold, I am about to go to my Lord. You too will go sooner or later."

The Holy Prophet paid a glowing tribute to Abu Bakr when he said: "There has been none more bountiful to me for his unwavering loyalty, devotion and sacrifice of wealth than Abu Bakr. If I were to choose a bosom friend it would be he, but Islam has made a closer brotherhood among us all."

The Holy Prophet also directed: "Let every door that leads into the mosque be closed, except the door of Abu Bakr." Thereafter the Holy Prophet returned to the apartment of Ayesha.

The last address of the Holy Prophet. The malady of the Holy Prophet increased, and his condition grew worse. The night following the seventh of June 632 lay heavy upon him. He was overheard praying constantly to Allah for His blessings. The morning of the 8th June brought some relief. Fever and pain somewhat abated. Moving the curtain of his apartment he saw the faithful offering their prayers under the Imamate of Abu Bakr. The Holy Prophet supported by Ali walked to the mosque. The people made way for him, opening their ranks as he stepped forward. Abu Bakr stepped backward to vacate his seat for the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet told Abu Bakr by a motion of his hand to continue to lead the prayers.

After the conclusion of the prayer, the Holy Prophet took his seat on the pulpit, and addressed the faithful thus: "By the Lord ! As for myself, I have not made lawful any thing excepting that which God has declared lawful; nor have I prohibited naught but that which God has forbidden."

The Muslims felt happy to see the Holy Prophet in their midst. They felt that the Holy Prophet had recovered, and that there was no danger to his life. Abu Bakr greeted the Holy Prophet on his recovery, and got his permission to go out of Madina to visit his family at Al-Sukh. Thereafter the Holy Prophet returned to the apartment of Ayesha and Abu Bakr left for Al-Sukh.

[View Page](#)

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